

N^o 6005. 100



TO THE READER.

This book is not in
good condition. Please
use it carefully.



THE GAME
OF
DRAW POKER

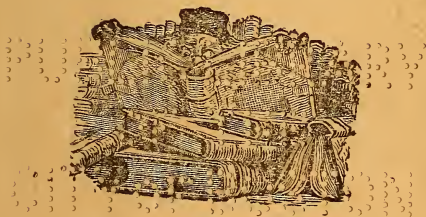
6005.100
BY JOHN W. KELLER

Author of "Tangled Lives," etc., etc.

INCLUDING THE TREATISE BY R. C. SCHENCK AND
RULES FOR THE NEW GAME OF

PROGRESSIVE POKER.

"To draw or not to draw, that is the question."



NEW YORK
WHITE, STOKES, & ALLEN

1887
C

680

Copyright, 1887,

BY WHITE, STOKES, & ALLEN.

WABE RADIO

LISTEN TO

WABE 90.7 FM

CONTENTS.

	PAGE.
PREFACE, ...	I
CHAPTER I.	
<i>Introduction.—The Element of Chance.—The Question of Stakes, ...</i>	3
CHAPTER II.	
<i>Technical Terms, ...</i>	9
CHAPTER III.	
<i>The Order of Hands.—The Straight.—The Blaze, ...</i>	13
CHAPTER IV.	
<i>Rules of Draw Poker.—The Limit.—The Ante.—The Straddle.—The Deal.—Bet- ting before the Draw.—Discard and Draw. —Betting after the Draw, ...</i>	18
CHAPTER V.	
<i>Jack Pots,—Incidental Jack Pots.—The Buck. —Progressive Jack-Pots, ...</i>	39

CHAPTER VI.

<i>Freeze Out,</i>	40
------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VII.

<i>Table Stakes,</i>	44
--------------------------------	----

CHAPTER VIII.

<i>The Unlimited and Old-Fashioned Games</i> . .	49
--	----

CHAPTER IX.

<i>Hints to Players.—On Judgment.—On Pa- tience.—On Coming In.—On Straights and Flushes.—On Curiosity.—On Bluffing.—On Attention.—On Borrowing,</i>	53
---	----

CHAPTER X.

<i>Schenck on Poker.—Of Drawing.—Relative Value of Hands in their Order, Beginning with Best,</i>	66
---	----

CHAPTER XI.

<i>Mathematical Probabilities,</i>	76
--	----

CHAPTER XII.

<i>Progressive Poker.—The Joker,</i>	79
--	----

PREFACE.

THE existing and increasing popularity of Draw Poker as a means of amusement to the better classes of American people, and the various methods of playing the game—some of which are radically wrong and the direct results of ignorance—amply justify a brief and simple treatise on Poker as a pastime. I have so frequently played this game with ladies and gentlemen, who either did not know its elementary parts, or differed materially as to its cardinal points, that I have become convinced that some easily accessible and easily understood book of reference is absolutely necessary for the preservation of good feeling among such players.

While I hope that this book may prove interesting to all poker-players, it is not my expectation or intention that it will prove instructive to those people who attempt to earn a livelihood by playing Poker for money. They know more of the game than I, and their methods generally are such as have no place in this little volume and, I trust, no sympathy from

its readers. It has been held by such people that the game of Draw Poker is dull and senseless unless it is played for money. This is the gambler's argument and is untenable because it is untrue. Such an argument simply degrades a really intellectual and scientific game at cards to a mere means of gambling. It might as well be said that Whist, or any other game of mingled chance and skill, is not interesting unless it is played for money.

Of course it can not be denied that to *some* people, and they may constitute a majority of card players, a monetary consideration or stake heightens the interest of Poker. But this is equally true of not only all games at cards but of all contests whatever. The fact remains, however, that Poker is largely played with chips of only nominal value, and that the game thus played affords excellent amusement and entertainment.

It is for the benefit of such people as play Poker in this way, and to such other players as look more to the pleasure of victory than the accumulation of spoils, that I have arranged the rules and observations of this book. To them, therefore, I tender it in the hope that its contents may rescue the praiseworthy game of Draw Poker from the misuses into which it has fallen through the errors of the misinformed and inexperienced.

J. W. K.

NEW YORK, Jan.,— 1887.

CHAPTER I.

Introduction.

No game at cards has ever attained such widespread popularity as Draw Poker. Not only is it played throughout America, the land of its inception and perfection, but it has crossed the high seas, capturing every steamship in its triumphal voyage, and has laid siege to all the civilized nations of Europe with such success that its suppression has become a serious factor in the political economy of one of the greatest powers of the Old World. Nor does this seductive game stop with Europe and the Caucasian races. Far-away India and flowery China know it and love it, and I have heard that swarthy Egyptians study its combinations on the historic banks of the Nile and in the shadows of the Pyramids. Wherever cards are played Draw Poker will find its way and will ultimately overcome all other games of mingled chance and skill.

Nor is the love that it engenders confined to any social class or classes. Rich and poor, high and low,

good and bad, male and female yield to the fascinations of Poker. Among its votaries are to be found statesmen, priests, financiers, *littérateurs*, artists, tradesmen and artisans. The greatest minds of the country have turned to it for recreation, and the meanest have debased it for gain. No game at cards has ever been so abused or degraded, and yet its popularity is unimpaired. In looking at the history of this game one is tempted to paraphrase a familiar proverb, and exclaim: Poker is mighty and must prevail!

This vast popularity alone should gain respect for Poker as a pastime. But when one comes to thoroughly understand the game, respect gives place to admiration, and admiration to love. This influence is wholly natural, and becomes palpable when we analyze Draw Poker. In the first place, there is no other game at cards that affords such numerous and varied combinations. It is an eternal round of surprise or disappointment. In the second place, no other game affords the player such option. There is the option of fixing the stake or naming the amount of the "ante;" there is the option of "going in;" there is the option of playing before the "draw;" there is the option of "discarding" and "drawing," and there is the final option of playing after the "draw." In the third place, no game whatever, whether played at cards or otherwise,

affords such a clear and comprehensive study of human nature. Draw Poker is insatiable in its exposure of human weaknesses. It tears the mask of bravery from the face of the coward ; it exposes the hypocrite ; it strips meanness of pretended generosity ; and it continually unearths unsuspected vices or develops astonishing virtues. The scientific poker player studies his adversaries as thoroughly as he does his cards, and attaches more importance to the peculiarities of their play than to the hands he holds himself.

If Draw Poker had no other recommendation than its ruthless exposition of human foibles, it would merit respect and perpetuity.

The Element of Chance.

Some worthy writers on the subject of Draw Poker have endeavored to eliminate the element of chance from this game. By a series of clever mathematical calculations they have made a fair showing in this direction, and a few of them have been bold enough to declare that they have approximated elimination. To my mind this claim is a mistake, and I believe that the experience of every poker player will bear me out in the assertion.

Dr. Pole, whose opinion of any game at cards is to be respected, has arranged a table showing the probability of the occurrence of the higher classes of

poker hands. From this table I will take one instance and compare the theory with experience. Dr. Pole has rightly calculated that the odds against a straight flush being held before the draw is 64,999 to 1. And yet my individual experience with straight flushes reduces that odds materially, for in ten years of poker playing I have held several such hands. In a single sitting of three or four hours I remember to have held two straight flushes. On the other hand a friend of mine, who has played fully as many poker hands as I, claims to have never held a straight flush. Now by what theory, other than chance, can it be explained that all these straight flushes should have fallen to me and none to him?

The effort to eliminate chance from the game of Draw Poker is as pitifully futile as the endeavor of those mistaken creatures, who wear out their lives searching for the secret of perpetual motion. Chance is a prime element of poker and must be so regarded in order to play the game successfully. Otherwise players would be continually placing false values on their hands. That is they would be playing their cards according to a fixed mathematical valuation, rather than according to a carefully estimated resultant of the possibilities of the hands out and the individual temperaments of the players engaged in the game. For it must be remembered that in poker "bluffing," or betting on nothing, is not only per-

missible, but is one of the most seductive features of the game.

The definite application of mathematics, to poker is at best but limited. Even Dr. Pole stops at the "draw," for the "discard" produces combinations that are not only multifarious but incalculable, the element of chance having doubled its force with the discard. Therefore, there is no absolutely sure way of winning at poker, provided that the game is played fairly. It must not be judged from this, however, that poker is a mere game of chance, for it is in reality the most skilful game at cards that has ever been invented. But the skill necessary to play the game well must be acquired by experience, and its perfection depends wholly upon the mental calibre of the player. Nevertheless, I venture to offer the following formula as a rule that should be remembered and applied by every poker-player.

Study your adversaries carefully ; watch the game closely ; be patient in adversity and calm in prosperity.

The Question of Stakes.

From its character and origin there can be little question that Draw Poker was intended by its inventors, whoever they were, for the purpose of gambling. But this does not detract from its merit as a means of amusement, nor is it any reason why the game should not be played without money be-

ing staked on the result. The finest equine contests invariably have the most money bet on them and the grandest exhibitions of rowing are made the occasion of heavy wagers. Is this a competent reason why people who love horses or rowing should be debarred from witnessing their favorite contests? I am not endeavoring to defend Draw Poker as an amusement, for it needs no defense. The fact that it has become the means of extensive gambling is not the fault of the game but of the people who play it for gain.

Personally, I do not object to a small wager on a game of poker, for I am free to confess that I see no harm in it. It is well known that ministers of the Gospel have enhanced their interest in Whist after this manner, and I know numerous irreproachable laymen who have ventured beyond "penny-ante" in Poker. But if money is to be tolerated in the game at all it should be in such small sums as not to arouse cupidity in the winner or occasion regret in the loser.

But whether the game be played for money or not, so long as the only object is amusement, the method is the same, and the rules and observations that I shall offer hereafter will apply equally in either case.

CHAPTER II.

Technical Terms.

In order to write intelligibly on this subject it is necessary to use certain technical terms, without which no game of Poker is ever played. As I believe some of my readers may not be familiar with these terms I append a full list of them with explanations :

Age.—The position at the immediate left of the dealer. The advantage of this position is that it insures its holder the last play under all circumstances, unless some other player may have *raised*. This position is sometimes known as the *eldest hand*.

Ante.—The stake deposited in the pool by the *age* at the beginning of each deal.

Blaze.—A hand consisting of five court cards. This hand is seldom played and will be treated of more fully hereafter.

Blind.—The amount deposited in a pool before the cards have been dealt. As poker is generally

played to-day, especially in the Eastern States, *blind* has the same meaning as *ante*.

Bluff.—To bet an inferior hand so as to win from a superior one.

Bob-tail Flush.—Any four cards of a suit. Usually worthless when *called*.

Call.—To put into the pool a sum equal to the largest amount bet by a preceding player.

Chips.—Tokens representing a fixed or nominal value in money.

Chipping.—Betting. That is a player usually says "I chip" instead of "I bet" in making his first wager after the *draw*.

Discard.—To take from your hand the number of cards you intend to draw and place them on the table face downwards near the next dealer.

Draw.—After discarding one or more cards to receive an equal number from the dealer.

Fill.—Strengthening the cards, to which you draw.

Foul Hand.—Any hand of more or less than five cards, or any hand obtained irregularly.

Freeze-out.—The name of a species of the game fully explained hereafter.

Going Better.—The act of betting more than the player, who has bet last before you.

Going in.—Making good the ante and straddles

and raises (if there be any of the last two), in order to draw cards and play for the pool.

Limit.—A condition made at the beginning of the game limiting the amount of any single bet or raise.

Making Good.—Depositing in the pool an amount equal to the highest bet previously made. The difference between *making good* and *calling*, is that a player may *raise* or *go better*, after having made good.

Original Hand.—The first five cards dealt to any player.

Pat Hand.—An original hand not likely to be improved by the draw. For instance, a straight, flush or full hand.

Pass.—To throw up your hand and retire from the game for that deal.

Playing Pat.—Playing an original hand without drawing cards. A favorite device of bluffers.

Pot.—The pool.

Raise.—This term means the same as *going better*, and is more common.

Say.—The time for any player to declare whether he will play or pass.

Seeing a Bet.—This term is synonymous with making good.

Straddle.—To place in the pool before the deal an amount double of the ante. No player has the

right to straddle the ante except that one immediately to the left of the *age*. If, however, this player avails himself of his privilege, the next on his left may straddle his straddle and thus straddling may be continued *in turn* until the limit of the game is reached.

Widow, or Kitty.—A percentage taken out of the pool to defray the expenses of the game or the cost of refreshments.

CHAPTER III.

The Order of Hands.

The order or rank of the hands played in Draw Poker is as follows, beginning with the lowest :

One Pair.—(Accompanied by three cards of different denominations.) The highest pair out wins. If two players hold like pairs the highest remaining card wins.

Two Pairs.—(Accompanied by one card of another denomination.) If each of the players holds two pairs, the highest pair wins. Example: Aces and deuces beat kings and queens. If two hands of like two pairs meet, the higher remaining card wins.

Triplets.—(Three cards of the same denomination unaccompanied by a pair.) The highest triplets win, and triplets always beat two pairs. Triplets are sometimes known as Three of a Kind.

Straight.—(A sequence of five cards not all of the same suit.) An ace may either begin or end a straight, but an ace can never be played intermediately in a straight. Example: Ace, King, Queen,

Knave, Ten is the highest straight. Five, Four, Three, Two, Ace is the lowest straight. But King, Queen, Ace, Two, Three is not a straight. If two or more straights come together the straight headed by the highest card wins. A straight beats triplets.

Flush.—(Five cards of the same suit not in sequence.) If two or more flushes come together the flush containing the highest card wins. If the highest cards tie, the next highest card determines the winning hand, and so on. A flush beats a straight.

Full Hand.—(Triplets accompanied by a pair.) If two or more full hands come together, the one containing the highest triplets wins. A full hand beats a flush.

Fours.—(Four cards of the same denomination accompanied by another card.) Fours beat a full hand, and the highest fours win.

Straight Flush.—(A sequence of five cards all of the same suit.) When two or more straight flushes come together, the one containing the highest card wins. The straight flush beats fours.

If none of the foregoing hands should be out, the hand containing the highest card wins. In case the highest card is tied, the next highest wins, and so on.

If upon a show of hands two or more players interested in the call hold identical hands, and these hands are the best out, the players holding such identical hands must divide the pool, share and share alike.

THE STRAIGHT.

The Straight.

It will be observed in the foregoing arrangement of hands according to their relative values, that I included the straight as a hand that should always be played, and that I have peremptorily fixed its value as being greater than that of triplets and less than that of a flush. My authority for this is the best usage of to-day, and my justification is the undeniable merit of the straight as a poker hand. Without it a straight flush would be impossible, and without the existence of the straight flush, four aces would be the best hand at poker, and, therefore, an absolute certainty to bet on—something that no one playing the game for amusement could possibly desire or tolerate. All written authorities on poker declare that straights can not be played without the consent of all the parties interested and that the intention to play them must be made known at the beginning of the game. This is a tradition rather than a just law and should be abolished. The straight is as legitimate as any other hand at poker, and the fact that it did not happen to be used by the originators of the game is nothing against it. These same originators acknowledged no limit, but who, except the most reckless gamblers, would think of playing poker to-day without a limit? The time has come when the straight should be accepted and played without question and,

DRAW POKER,

...I have given it a place in the list of useful and necessary poker hands.

The relative value of the straight to triplets is also a question that has caused considerable discussion in the past. This discussion hinged upon the question as to whether the straight should beat or be beaten by triplets. The game has been played both ways, and even to-day, I believe, in some parts of the West, triplets are played to beat the straight. The usage of intelligent and experienced players, however, and this is the best authority, has fixed the value of straights above that of triplets.

Nor is this valuation unjustified by either mathematical calculation or an analysis of the influence of the straight on the game of Draw Poker. Dr. Pole has calculated that the odds against holding a pat straight is 254 to 1, while the same authority gives the odds against holding pat triplets as being only 45 to 1. It will be seen from this that the chance against occurrence, which is the basis of relative valuation of poker hands, places the straight far above triplets. Moreover, if triplets were played to beat a straight, the latter hand would be of so little value that the chances of filling it would never be taken, and it would, therefore, be practically eliminated from the game. The proper place for a straight is above triplets and below a flush, and it should always be played.

Efforts have been made to introduce into the game of Draw Poker what is known as the "skip" straight—a sequence of alternate cards. Example : Two, Four, Six, Eight, Ten ; or Ace, Three, Five, Seven, Nine. Such hands, however, have never met with favor, simply because they deserve none. They add nothing of interest to the game and serve only to encumber it.

The Blaze.

The blaze is another hand that is occasionally played in Draw Poker. It consists of five court cards, and when played beats two pairs. It is the most contemptible of all poker innovations and has become almost obsolete. The game of Draw Poker needs no such addition to make it interesting. Its combinations are already incalculable and the player who can master the game as it is ordinarily played to-day should be satisfied.

CHAPTER IV.

Rules of Draw Poker.

In order to insure pleasure and harmony in playing Draw Poker, it is absolutely necessary that each player should carefully watch the progress of the game and strictly observe its rules. A lack of knowledge of these rules has produced many curious and often absurd ways of playing the game, while the carelessness of individual players has contributed more to confusion and dispute than any other single cause or all other causes combined. In preparing the following set of rules I have not only consulted the best written authorities on Draw Poker, but have borne in mind the usage of the best and most experienced players of my acquaintance.

The implements necessary for this game are a full pack of cards and a set of poker chips. The latter are made from various materials, but the best are of ivory. They should be circular in form, identical in size and of at least three different colors,

representing as many separate valuations. The last requisite is due to the necessity of making change in the progress of the game. The number of players who can comfortably engage in poker at one sitting ranges from two to seven. I have known eight people to play in the same game at the same time, but this number is excessive, as it induces personal discomfort and forces the discard into the draw.

The Limit.

The first thing for a poker party to do is to fix the limit governing their game. This should be the case whether the chips represent real or nominal values. The unlimited game of Draw Poker is a dangerous institution, and so far as I know is never played for amusement. If the chips represent mere nominal values it does not matter much about the limit; but if they represent real values the means and inclination of the players should be carefully considered. In all instances I would recommend small stakes and a corresponding limit. When the limit is once fixed it should remain throughout the game. Many players will play the greater part of an evening at the limit agreed upon and then, finding themselves out of pocket, will request an increased limit. This request should never be granted.

The Ante.

The next thing in order is the determination of the deal. This is effected by throwing a card to each player, the deal going to the one receiving the lowest card. Then comes the ante, which is placed on the table by the player immediately to the left of the dealer and before the cards are dealt. The rule governing the amount of the ante is that it shall not exceed the limit of the game. This rule, however, is susceptible of modification, and in my opinion should be modified, at least, by agreement among the players. Otherwise a party of liberal players will force the ante up to the limit throughout the game and thus reduce the play approximately to an exhibition of hands. Of course, with cautious players this would not occur, but caution is not generally a marked characteristic of people who play poker for amusement. The proportion of the ante to the limit is a matter worthy of consideration, and to insure all the phases, and consequently all the pleasures of the game, this proportion should never be less than 1 to 10, and my experience teaches that 1 to 20 makes a better game. To illustrate my meaning I will take this example: If the limit is fixed at one dollar the ante should never exceed ten cents; and if it were kept at five cents, a more scientific and consequently a better game would ensue. But there is no law in Draw Poker to confine the ante to any

sum less than one-half the limit, although this may be effected by agreement. The following rule, therefore, must be accepted as governing the ante: *The ante must be placed on the table by the age before any cards are dealt, and the amount of the ante must not exceed one-half the limit of the game.*

The Straddle.

The right to straddle the ante rests wholly with the player immediately to the left of the age. If this player chooses not to avail himself of his privilege, no other player in the game can put up a straddle. If, however, this player does straddle the ante, the player immediately upon his left may straddle his straddle, and this process may be continued *in turn towards the left* until one-half of the limit of the game is reached; the rule governing the limit of the ante applying to the limit of the straddle. When no straddle is made, the age always has the last say before the draw. But in the event of straddling, the last straddler has the last say before the draw. *This does not apply after the draw, as the privileges of the age are then not transferable.*

The Deal.

The cards must be shuffled face downwards above the board. Any player in the game has the right to shuffle the cards, the dealer always having

the right to shuffle them last. The player at the right of the dealer must cut the cards, and then the dealer must give to each player one card at a time in rotation, beginning with the ace and dealing to the left. In this order he must deliver to each player five cards.

If a deal is made without the cards being properly cut, or if a card is faced in the pack, there must be a fresh deal. The cards must be re-shuffled and re-cut, and the dealer must deal again.

If a card is accidentally exposed by the dealer while in the act of dealing, the player to whom such card is dealt *must* accept it as though it had not been exposed.

If the dealer should give to himself or any one of the other players *more or less than five cards*, and the player receiving such improper number of cards should discover and announce the fact, *before he lifts his hand from the table*, it is a misdeal. The cards must be re-shuffled and re-cut and the dealer must deal again.

If the dealer should give to himself, or any one of the other players, *more or less than five cards*, and the player receiving such improper number of cards should *lift his hand* from the board *before* announcing the fact, no misdeal occurs, and the player holding the foul hand must retire from the game for that deal.

These last two rules are among the most important in poker, and yet through ignorance or carelessness they are more often slighted than any others.

The deal must go round the table in rotation from right to left.

Betting Before the Draw.

We have now reached a point in the game where it is necessary to impress upon the mind of the reader the most important general rule in poker: *Everything must be done in turn.* The non-observation of this imperative law of Draw Poker has occasioned more confusion than all other causes combined.

After each player has received his complement of cards the betting before the draw begins. If no straddle has been made, the first player to the left of the age must "say." If he desires to play he must first make good, that is, he must deposit in the pool a sum double the amount of the ante. If he desires to play for more than this he can do so by placing in the pool any additional amount not exceeding the limit of the game. If he should not care to play at all in that hand he can pass and retire from the game until the next deal. But whatever the first player may do the next say belongs to the next player to the left, who may come in or pass as he pleases. If he comes in, he must make good the ante

and deposit in the pool a sum equal to the raise, if there be any, of the preceding player. He may also make an additional raise of any amount not exceeding the limit of the game. And thus the betting progresses from right to left, the age having the last say. This rule in brief is as follows :

Each player must in turn say whether he passes or plays. If he passes he must retire from the game for that deal. If he plays he must deposit in the pool an amount equal to the highest deposit of any previous player, and he may raise this highest deposit any additional amount within the limit of the game.

If any player has deposited any amount in the pool and does not wish to "see" the raise of any subsequent player, he may retire from the game, but in doing so he must sacrifice whatever he may have already deposited in the pool.

If a player raises and no other player sees his raise, he is entitled to whatever is in the pool.

If all the players in the game except the age pass out, the age is entitled to the ante, and a new deal is in order.

In betting before the deal no hands are shown.

The effect of the straddle is to increase the pool and transfer the last say before the draw from the age to the last straddler.

Discard and Draw.

After the deal has been completed, discarding and drawing must be done in turn, beginning with the age, if the age remains in. If the age has passed out, the next player to the left of the dealer must discard first and then all the players remaining in must discard in turn to the dealer, who has the last discard.

A player may discard as many of his cards as he chooses and call upon the dealer to give him a like number from those remaining on the top of the pack.

All the players must discard face downwards on the board before any player is helped by the dealer. (While this rule is given as imperative by the best authorities on poker, it is not generally observed in the usage of to-day, the custom being for each player in turn to discard and draw before the next player discards. While this custom has the same effect as the rule given above, it expedites matters and in my opinion is to be preferred.)

No card that has once been discarded must be taken in hand again.

Each player must take the exact number of cards that he calls for.

Any player, previous to lifting his hand from the board or making a bet, may demand of the dealer how many cards the latter drew, and the dealer must answer correctly. By lifting his hand from the board

DRAW POKER.

or making a bet, a player forfeits the right to inquire and removes the obligation to answer. Under no circumstances has a player the right to ask this question of any other player except the dealer, or to ask it of the dealer concerning any other player than the dealer himself. The theory of this rule is that every player should avail himself of the ample opportunity to know exactly what is being done in the game.

Should the dealer give to any player more cards than the latter has demanded, and should the player discover and *announce* this fact before lifting his cards from the board, the dealer must withdraw the superfluous cards and restore them to the pack. But if the player lift his cards from the board before announcing to the dealer that a mistake has been made, he must retire from the game for that hand.

If the dealer should give any player fewer cards than the latter has called for, and the player should discover and announce the fact before lifting his cards from the table, the dealer must give to the player enough cards from the top of the pack to complete the number originally demanded. But if the player should lift his hand before announcing the mistake, he must retire from the game for that hand.

If in dealing to a player *after the discard* the dealer should expose a card or cards, such card or cards must be placed on the bottom of the pack, and the dealer must give to the player a correspond-

ing number from the top of the pack. (Usage has interpreted this rule in two ways: First, that the hand of the player, to whom the exposed card is dealt, must be completed *before* cards shall be dealt to any other player. Second, that the hand of the player, to whom the exposed card is dealt, must be completed *after* all the other players shall have been served with their quota of cards. Of these two interpretations I prefer the first on account of its convenience and common-sense.)

Betting After the Draw.

After each player remaining in for the draw has deposited a sum in the pool equal to the highest deposit of any other player, and after each player in turn has been served with the cards he has asked for, the betting after the draw begins. Of those that have remained in for the draw, the first to bet is the first to the left of the age; or, if he fails to bet, he must pass out. He may bet any sum not exceeding the limit of the game. The next player to the left may either pass out, call the preceding bet or raise it. And thus on to the age, who has the right of the last say. But in no case can a single raise exceed the limit of the game.

If the age should not remain in for the draw, the first player to the age's left must still make the bet, as the privilege of the age is not transferable.

DRAW POKER.

A player making a bet must deposit the amount in the pool. The worst of all poker habits, owing the pool, or "going shy," as it is called, results from the non-observance of this very important rule.

If any player does not call or raise the highest bet of any preceding player, he must retire from the game and abandon whatever he has already deposited in the pool.

If a bet is called each player interested in that bet must show his *entire* hand to the board, the caller last, and the pool goes to the holder of the best hand.

All poker hands show for themselves. A player may call his hand anything he chooses, but the cards must be shown, and they alone determine the result. Therefore, if a player miscalls his hand he does not lose the pool on that account.

If a player bets or raises a bet, and no other player calls him, or goes better, he wins the pool and can not be compelled to show his hand.

If a player pass or throw up his hand, he must retire from the game until the next deal.

If a player bets with more or less than five cards in his hand he loses the pool, as he is betting on a foul hand. If only one player is betting against this foul hand, that player takes the pool. If there are more than one thus betting, the holder of the *best* hand takes the pool.

If a player makes a bet and some other player raises him, and if the maker of the previous bet is not possessed of enough funds to see that raise, the previous bettor may put up whatever he possesses and call for a show for that amount. This call for a show, however, does not debar other players in the game from continuing to bet as long as they choose. But when the final call is made and the hands are shown, if the player who has called for a show has the best hand, he takes the ante and an amount from each of his adversaries equal to that which he himself has put in the pool. The remainder of the pool goes to the next best hand.

If a player borrows to raise, however, he must also borrow to call.

These are the fundamental and imperative laws governing the game of Draw Poker, and while no one can learn the game thoroughly in any other way than the experience of playing, nevertheless every player should be so familiar with these laws as to instantly detect a transgression or omission.

CHAPTER V.

Jack Pots.

From time to time, since Draw Poker was invented, innovations have crept into the game. Of all these attempts at improvement, there are only two that have unquestionably obtained their object and consequently merit embodiment in the rules governing the game. These are the limit and the straight. Without the former, Poker would be a most dangerous game, and without the latter, the natural and rightful combinations of the game would be reduced, and there would exist in poker at least one absolute certainty, four aces. I believe that poker players, generally, will admit that the limit and the straight are desirable and praiseworthy.

To all other innovations reasonable objections may be raised. The most notable is the jack pot, a parasite of poker that has attained immense popularity, because it embodies and partakes of the nature of lottery more than of a scientific game at cards. Lottery has always been popular in any form from

those gigantic octopi that stretch out their arms over an entire nation, to the pious gambling arrangements that delight the participants in church fairs. Human nature appears to find much pleasure in coquetting with chance, and the bolder the scheme and the further removed from logic or reason, the greater the fascination. Small minds, too, such as are incapable of the profound thought, the rapid deduction, and the mental discipline necessary to successful competition at Draw Poker, turn with avidity to the scheme of lottery, as afforded by jack pots. For here comparatively little thinking is necessary, and the pool generally goes as the cards fall.

This is the only way in which I can account for the unquestionable popularity of jack pot. For this innovation is almost wholly foreign to the *genus* of poker. In the first place it makes the game compulsory instead of optional, and option is at the same time one of the greatest beauties and one of the greatest merits of Draw Poker. In the second place the jack pot, in a limited game, reduces the play almost to a show of cards. If a player is in bad luck at jack pots, he has no chance of saving himself, for all the players are taxed equally without regard to their wealth or poverty, their prosperity or adversity.

The jack pot derives its name from the fact that such a pot, or pool, can not be opened by any

hand of less value than two knaves, or jacks. It is said to have been invented in the West by a set of reckless players for the purpose of regaining their losses. Whether this account of its origin be true or not, the jack pot is often resorted to as a means of regaining losses, although such efforts more often prove futile than otherwise.

In a jack pot each player must put into the pool the same amount of money, and the pot can not be opened by a hand of less value than two jacks. The deal is the same as in ordinary poker, viz: from right to left and one card at a time to each player. But the position of the age is almost reversed from that of the regular game, the dealer having the last say, and consequently the first player to the left of the dealer, having the first say. This, however, applies only before the draw.

If each player in turn should refuse to open the pot, for it is optional with the player to refuse, even though he may have in his hand a pair of jacks or better, there must be a new deal, the deal progressing from right to left as in the regular game.

But before the cards are dealt the second time, each player must "feed" the pot with an amount equal to that "fed" by every other player. This "feeding" of the pot is simply a tax levied on each player prior to each deal. For if the second deal should not result in opening the pot, a third deal

must be made, and a third tax, or "feed," must be imposed, and this operation must be repeated until the pot is opened. It will be seen from this that a jack pot may run on indefinitely, and that the amount eventually contributed to the pot by each player may far exceed that of his original contribution.

The amount of the "feed" is a matter to be settled by the players before the game begins. Custom varies largely as to the amount of the "feed." In some instances it is the same as the original deposit of each player. In other instances it is less, running all the way from one-half to one-tenth of the original deposit. And then again in an unlimited game, or in a game of unusually large limit, the "feed" has been doubled with each deal, its original value being the value of the original deposit. I am happy to say, however, that this last method of playing jack pots is very rare, and can be indulged in only by people who have a large amusement fund at their command. If jack pots are to be played at all I would recommend the "feed" to be at least a fifth of the original deposit. For instance, if the original deposit is fifty cents, ten cents each is an ample tax to be levied on the players prior to each deal after the first deal of each pot. I would especially recommend this in games whose limit does not exceed two dollars and a half.

No player can open a jack pot for more than the limit of the game.

After the draw the player who opened the jack pot must bet first, or declining to bet, must pass out and retire from the game until the next deal.

If the opener should pass out without betting, the next player to his left must bet; and if this next player pass out, the next to the left must bet, and so on.

If all the players in the game should pass out in turn to the last player, who has drawn cards, this last player may take the pot and need not show his hand.

If the opener should be raised out before the draw, the next player drawing cards to his left must bet first.

The player who opens a jack pot, must *under all circumstances* show two jacks, or better, to the board. This applies whether or not he is raised out, refuses to bet, or is called. (The application of this rule has given rise to much dispute, the point of discussion being as to whether in showing two jacks, or better, the opener should be compelled to show his entire hand to the board in cases where he has not been called. Usage is about equally divided on this point, although I can not see why it should be divided at all. The law clearly means that the opener shall be compelled to show

only enough of his hand to prove that he could legally open the jack pot. This is also equitable, for one of the fundamental laws of poker is that any player must pay for the privilege of seeing the hand of any other. Therefore the opener of a jack pot unless he is called need show only enough of his hand to prove that he could lawfully open the pot. If he is called, of course, he must show his entire hand. If any question should be raised as to whether he had more or less than five cards in his hand, he can settle that question quite as well by placing his cards face downwards on the table as face upwards.)

If in opening a pot a player finds in his hand a pair and a four flush, or four straight, he may break his pair and draw to the straight or the flush. But in doing this he must lay his discard to one side and give notice of the reservation to the board, in order that he may show a legal opening hand at the proper time. If he should fail to give this notice and his discard should in any way become mixed with other cards, he must forfeit whatever he may have put in the pot, the best contending hand taking the pool.

The general poker rules for raising and calling govern jack pots.

Incidental Jack Pots.

Thus far I have discussed jack pots as they stand alone and are played by themselves. They are, however, played incidentally in a regular game of Draw Poker. The devices for bringing them about are numerous and varied, but the most common is this :

If every player in turn before the draw passes out until the age is reached, the pot becomes a jack pot and a new deal must be made with the age as the dealer.

This is the common law governing the making of jack pots in a regular game of Poker. It will be seen how entirely coercive it is and how foreign to the nature of the regular game of Draw Poker. If the age comes to a reckless player he will probably make the largest ante allowed by the limit. The different players pass out, and the result is a jack pot, every player being compelled to come in, whether he desires it or not, at an expense fixed by one reckless player.

The jack pot kills caution, weakens judgment and makes patience highly expensive. Thus it will be seen that this innovation blights the three great qualities of a Poker player. Jack pots really should not be played unless they are played altogether, and then the game should be called lottery and not Poker.

And yet jack pots are so popular now-a-days that they find their way into almost every game of Poker. Indeed players are so anxious for them that they invent all sorts of pretexts for their existence. In some games a jack pot is made on every misdeal ; in others the age is forced out even after the draw ; in others, still, there exist what are called "forced" jack pots. The method of making these is as follows : If only one player comes in before the draw the age may refuse to play and thus make a jack pot. Of course in this game, if all the players pass out to the age, the result is a jack pot.

In another instance the age may force a single player to make a jack pot by putting half of the single player's stake in the jack pot. This phase of the game is constructed on the remarkable principle that the single player had won the age's ante, but that the age had the right to choose whether to give that ante to its rightful owner or to consign it to a pool where all could play for it again, the age included. Of course the age always chooses to give it to the pool. Much of the logic of making jack pots is akin to this.

The "Buck."

With all these methods at their command, and often with all of them in actual use, some players are still not satisfied with regard to the frequency

✓

of jack pots. Therefore having utilized all the provisions of the game known to them, they resort to the bold and ludicrous expedient of "passing the buck." The "buck" is any inanimate object, usually knife or pencil, which is thrown into a jack pot and temporarily taken by the winner of the pot. Whenever the deal reaches the holder of the "buck" a new jack pot must be made. In this way a jack pot is assured at least once in every round of deals and the chances are that it will occur much oftener. While the use of the "buck" is ridiculous in the eyes of a scientific poker player, it is nevertheless productive of much amusement in the game when the chips are of nominal or small value.

Progressive Jack Pots.

Ordinarily, the opening hand for a jack pot remains at jacks or better. But the game is often played with variations even in this respect. The result is the progressive jack pot, viz: If the pot is not opened on the first deal the opening hand for the next deal increases from jacks, or better, to queens or better; and if it is not opened on the second deal, the opening increases from queens, or better, to kings, or better, and so on to aces, or better, where it usually rests until the pot is opened.

Progressive jack pots are not commendable even in comparison with uncommendable jack pots.

general, for the reason that each successive step gives fuller information as to the value of the opening hand. Besides this the progressive jack pot curtails option and speculation to a greater degree than any other invention tolerated under the name of poker.

Another variation of jack pots is ascending and descending scales ; the opening hand beginning at jacks, or better, and going up to aces or better, and then descending from aces or better, to jacks or better, and thus on, up and down, until the pot is opened. Still another variation of jack pots is the descent from jacks, or better, to tens, or better, and from tens, or better, to nines, or better, and so on, until the pot is opened. This last is seldom played, however, except in a game where the players are limited to two people.

The game of draw poker does not need the jack pot to make it interesting or entertaining ; but if jack pots are to be played, the hand necessary to open them should be fixed permanently at jacks, or better, and the methods of bringing about a jack pot should be confined to that first given in this chapter, viz : When each player in turn to the ace shall have passed out before the draw, the result is a jack pot.

CHAPTER VI.

Freeze Out.

Freeze Out is a variation of Draw Poker that is much played and that possesses many meritorious features. This is especially the case when the chips are of nominal value. Unlike any other form of poker the exact amount of loss or gain is fixed at the beginning of the game. For in Freeze Out each player stakes a certain amount, and when that amount is lost he must retire from the game. Consequently he can lose no more than his original stake and can win no more than the combined stakes of his adversaries.

Freeze Out may be played by any number of players from two to seven. At the beginning of the game each player must invest an equal sum in chips, and under no circumstances must he add to his original investment except by winning from his adversaries.

Whenever any player shall have lost his original stake, he must retire from the game. He is then

said to be "frozen out." The game must then be continued by the remaining players until another competitor is "frozen out," and so on until only one player is left, who is entitled to all the stakes.

If in the course of the game a player's stake becomes so reduced that he can not see a raise, he is entitled, nevertheless, to a show for what he may have left. But under no circumstances can he bet more than the full amount of this remainder. For instance, if he should have but one chip left and should hold a royal flush he can bet only that one chip.

But the fact that any one player may be so reduced does not deter his adversaries from betting any amount they may choose, provided that amount does not exceed their individual stakes.

If in the final show of hands the reduced player holds the best hand, he is entitled to the stake that he himself has put in the pot, and to an additional amount equal to that stake from *each* of his adversaries. The residue of the pool, if there be any, must go to the next best hand.

In Freeze Out any player must always have a show for his money, and therefore he is placed in the position of making a permanent call provided that he has deposited all his stake in that pool. Raising out a better hand than his does not effect this result, as has been adjudged in the case of Table Stakes.

DRAW POKER.

For instance if A, B, C are playing Freeze Out, and A has deposited all his capital in the pool, any subsequent raising of B and C does not effect A's right to a final call, or his right to win twice the amount of his investment provided he holds a better hand than B or C, even though B or C may have been raised out with a better hand than A. To make this clearer, suppose that A holds three tens, B three nines, and C three jacks. A has deposited all the money that he has in the pot. He can therefore bet no more. But B and C may bet, and B with three nines raises C with three jacks to such an amount that C refuses to call. This action on the part of C deprives him of any further interest in the pot, as he has voluntarily retired from the game. This is not the case with A, however, and in the final show of hands he wins twice the amount of his stake in addition to that stake, because his three tens beat B's three nines. Of course the remainder of the pot goes to B.

In Freeze Out there should be no fixed limit as in the ordinary game of Draw Poker. The reason for this is that the primary conditions of Freeze Out constitute a limit in themselves. No player can at any time bet more than he possesses of the sum of the original stakes, but the nature of Freeze Out demands that he be allowed to bet *all* this at any time

he chooses. To play an ordinary limit in Freeze Out serves only to retard the game and make it dull. In other respects the laws of Draw Poker as heretofore given, govern the laws of Freeze Out.

CHAPTER VII.

Table Stakes.

Still another variation of Draw Poker, and a highly commendable one, is to be found in the game of Table Stakes. Indeed this method of playing Poker has become so popular that it has been generally adopted in club usage. In character, it bears a marked similiarity to the Freeze Out game, but with this difference: In Freeze Out, if a player loses his original stake, he must retire from the game; in the Table Stakes game he may provide himself with a fresh stake under certain conditions.

But in both games the cardinal and most admirable principle is that they are conducted on a cash basis. The credit system of Poker is the very worst outcome of the game. It not only severs friendships and makes bad debts, but often leads well-meaning but weak-willed people to play far beyond their actual means. While I trust that no reader of this book will ever risk at Poker a penny that he feels he cannot lose without regretting the loss, it is well to

fortified against the temptations of the credit system of Poker. I have seen many of these games and out of them all I can not recall a single one, which did not result in some unpleasantness. Therefore, I most heartily recommend the Table Stakes game, which is in detail as follows :

Each player must deposit on the table at the beginning of the game a fixed stake. This stake should be in all cases an equal one.

The amount of this stake can not be added to from any source except the winnings from other players.

No player can retire from the game with any part of this stake until the close of the game or until the hour fixed for its close.

No player can be deprived of a call, if he puts up all his money.

No player can play on credit. He must put into the pot the amount that he bets.

No player can borrow from another player *under any circumstances*.

When a player exhausts his stake he can buy a fresh stake only by the unanimous consent of the other players.

The fundamental laws of Draw Poker govern the Table Stakes game.

While these rules may seem harsh they are nevertheless just and should be used, because they pro-

tect honest and honorable players from those that are dishonest and dishonorable. In Poker, as in all other transactions of life, men who pay their debts are constantly victimized by those who do not. In the Table Stakes game of Poker this is impossible, for no debts can be contracted. All attempts to modify the rules of this game should be regarded with suspicion and should be discountenanced.

In this connection I beg leave to call attention to the following decision, that has been largely published :

"A, B, and C are playing Draw Poker. Before the draw, A bets \$5, B sees it, and C raises it \$10. A has only \$5 left, which he puts up for a sight ; B puts up to cover C's raise.

After the draw, B bets \$5, and C raises him \$50. B declines to call, bluffed out by C's last raise. But, on a show of hands to decide what becomes of A's stake, A has three kings ; B three aces ; and C, three queens. The question is, what becomes of A's stake ?

The decision is that C takes the entire pot.

The theory of this decision is based on the fact that the \$30 of the pot, in which alone A had an equal interest, is a pot of itself, in which all three players are equally concerned. When the hands are shown, A loses his money to B, because that player had a better hand than A, and A's claim

ceases. But B's winnings from A, as well as all his other interest in the pot, reverts to C, whose hand actually ranked B's, because he made it a stronger one for current purposes by backing it to an extent beyond B's inclination."

I submit that this decision is unjust and contrary to the laws and spirit of Poker. B had the option to call C, but refused and passed out. Now one of the most imperative laws in poker declares specifically that *if a player pass or throw up his hand, he passes out of the game and can not, under any circumstances whatever, participate further in the game during that deal*. Under this undisputed law and by his own voluntary act B is debarred from any further claim to any part of the pot under consideration. But this is not the case with A, who has put up all his money and called for a show. If he had more money it is possible that he would call C's raise of \$50 or even go better. But whether he would or not he has the right, under the rules governing Table Stakes Poker, to a show for his money. Therefore the decision in this suppositious case should be this :

A must take \$30 of the money in the pool and C must take the balance. B gets nothing because he had not the courage to back his hand.

The decision that I have quoted directly transgresses two important Poker laws and is therefore spu-

rious. Nor is its logic any better than its law. "The theory of this decision," to quote from the quotation, "is based on the fact that the \$30 of the pot, in which alone A had an equal interest is a pot of itself, in which all three players are equally concerned." But it is not a fact that this \$30 is a pot of itself. If it is, why is its possession not decided at that point? And if it is a pot of itself, and B can be brought back into the game, after having once passed out, why should not this \$30 be awarded to B? He had called at the \$30 point and had the best hand at the end of the game. If he is to be restored to the game at all, he should certainly be restored with full rights. Certainly it would be just as logical to restore him in order that he might win the pot for himself, as to restore him that he might win it for C. But the decision is absurd on its face and needs to be discussed no further. I am only surprised to find it published in some otherwise excellent treatises on Draw Poker.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Unlimited and Old-fashioned Games,

I shall not spend much time in discussing either the unlimited or the so-called old-fashioned game of Draw Poker. The former is such a dangerous game that even professional gamblers are wary of it (when playing among themselves) and the latter is well nigh obsolete. The unlimited game of Poker is noticeable chiefly on account of the wonderful romances that it has been made the vehicle of and that still cluster about it in luxuriance. This form of Poker used to prevail on the Mississippi River steamboats, the origin of so much that is extraordinary, and if we are to believe the astonishing stories that are offered to us as the incidental history of the game "before the war," Southern planters were wont to stake untold gold, astonishing checks, whole plantations, and entire droves of negro slaves on the hands they held. The captains of the steamboats used to take a hand, too, and stake the very boats in which the voyages were being made.

Even the nation's illustrious dead do not escape the Poker romancer's fertile fancy, and the revered names of Clay and Webster are made to figure as redoubtable warriors in terrific Poker battles. It is told to us seriously that Clay with ace high once called Webster's raise of some thousands and found his opponent with only a pair of deuces. Poker players of this generation in accepting this story, if any do accept it, must conclude that if Henry Clay was as ignorant of state-craft as this play would indicate that he was ignorant of Poker, he would not have risen above the grade of a ward politician.

But Poker players of to-day do not accept this story as true, nor for that matter, any of the Mississippi River steamboat fairy tales. The gentlemen of that day were as conservative relatively as the gentlemen of this, and if they did play the unlimited game of Draw Poker it was because they knew no other. As a matter of fact the unlimited game is played with far more caution than the limited game, and if there are unquestionable instances of men losing princely fortunes in this way, the losers were universally fools or drunkards.

Nevertheless, the unlimited game should be steered clear of. Few American gentlemen possess sufficient means to successfully combat all of its possibilities, and the limited game affords quite as much amusement. And I contend that Poker should

never be played with any deeper purpose than amusement, even by those players that are candid enough to confess that their only amusement is in winning.

The chief purpose in the unlimited game is to give full swing to bluffing. For while the regulations that govern the unlimited game are generally those that govern the limited game, straights and jack pots are usually ruled out and the privilege of calling for a show for the money that any player has about him, is denied.

If two or more men agree to play the unlimited game, it is understood that each player is prepared to call any raise that any other player may make. If any player should make a bet to an amount greater than the sum of money immediately at the command of another player, and this second player should desire to call, the second player may have twenty-four hours in which to procure the money necessary to call the first player. In the meantime the cards are to be sealed up and lodged in hands satisfactory to both the players or all the players.

The possibility of such a contingency as this must forever debar the unlimited game from the consideration of amusement seekers.

The Old-Fashioned Game.

The old-fashioned game of Draw Poker differs from that usually played nowadays in that there is

no compulsory ante. Many Poker players claim that every step in the game should be optional. Therefore they object to the compulsory ante of the age as played in the modern game. Their method is as follows :

The dealer opens the hand by putting up a fixed ante before dealing. But this is not in the strict sense a bet or blind.

The age alone has the privilege of going a blind, provided he does so before the cards are cut for the deal, but this is optional and not compulsory.

Previous to the draw, any player may pass and afterwards come in again, provided no bet or blind has been made before he passes.

If, previous to the draw, all the players, including the dealer, pass without making a bet, the hand is ended, and a new deal must be made, the age, who has now become the dealer, putting up an ante and dealing.

In other respects the game is similar to the modern game. The possibility of passing twice is a feature of this game that causes much uncertainty and amusement, but the game as a whole was long since discarded for the regular ante game.

CHAPTER IX.

Hints to Players.

Thus far I have dealt mainly with the specific laws governing the game of Draw Poker and the numerous variations of that game. My purpose has been to present those laws in as clear a light as possible and to arrange them in the most convenient form for reference. It is a more congenial task to turn to a few generalities of the game.

While I am aware that there are many people, who know more about the successful application of the rules of this game than I, there are also many, I believe, who know less. Else I should not have undertaken to write this volume. But a correct knowledge of the rules of the game does not always make successful Poker players, although it invariably makes desirable ones.

Some writers on the subject of Poker have assumed to lay down a formula, by which success is almost, if not quite assured. This formula, however verbose it may be, generally amounts to the

advice to never go in on less than triplets. While it is possible that such a plan would generally win in a game where the other players were more liberal it would take but a very short time for these more liberal players to detect the plan, and to boycott the player pursuing it. For my own part I had rather lose at a game of Poker than to win at the cost of being considered mean. I would advise all amusement seekers, therefore, to abandon the "triplet" policy, for they may set it down as a moral certainty that if they do not abandon such a policy the other players will abandon them.

The theory that a player can win by meanness where all the other players are liberal, is not to be entertained by any gentleman. At the same time it does not follow that a player must play foolishly because others in the game play foolishly. Caution is an excellent thing in Poker, and it should always be exercised with judgment.

On Judgment.

My individual experience has taught me that a study of my adversaries, their natures, temperaments and methods is of more value than a study of the cards that come into my hand. Still every player should govern his play not by either his own hand or his impression of his adversaries separately, but by the resultant of these two forces. For instance

On Straights and Flushes.

The question of playing incomplete straights and flushes is one that presents itself to every Poker player as a serious problem. The best players of my acquaintance refuse to play them except under certain circumstances when the percentage of risk is overcome by the percentage of possible gain. For instance, if a large jack pot is being contended for, and all the players are in, or a large number of them, it would be not only justifiable but wise to take the risk of filling a straight or flush. But in a small pot with only one or two players against you, it would not be wise to pay for the privilege of drawing to your incomplete straight or flush. Not but what you are just as likely to fill your straight or flush in the latter instance, as in the former, but because the proportion of possible gain to your actual investment is far beneath the proportion of the chances against your filling to the chances for your filling.

An excellent way to play incomplete straights or flushes is to bet them before the draw as though they were two pairs or better. By playing such hands in this way you create the impression that you are tolerably well fortified, and unless your adversary improves in the draw he is not likely to call your raise after the draw. Then of course there is always the possibility that you may fill your hand, in which event you are well armed for battle.

DRAW POKER.

adv

i' In cases when you have come in on a hand containing a pair and a four flush or straight, and you have been raised, it is well to throw away one of your pair and draw to the flush or straight. This is especially wise when the pair is small. For if you fill the flush or straight, you will probably win, and if you do not fill it, there's an end of the whole thing. In drawing to the pair you not only take the chance of not improving, but the additional chance of being beaten if you do improve.

On Curiosity.

The deadliest of all Poker vices is curiosity. Curiosity is rarely worth gratifying when it costs nothing to gratify it, but when this gratification must be paid for continually and largely, what must we say? The Poker player that always calls, always loses in the long run. The other players in the game readily and quickly detect this fault, and they then invariably raise the unfortunate victim of curiosity with the expectation of a call. Every good Poker player is content to sometimes lay down the better hand.

It is due to curiosity that women generally do not play Poker as well as men. I say this with some fear of offending my fair readers, but a long experience of playing the game with the gentler sex compels the assertion. In dash and brilliancy of play they often excel their male competitors, but

when it comes to calling they must see what is out against them. But curiosity in Poker playing is by no means confined to women. Many men are inveterate and habitual callers, and consequently habitual losers. Players of this kind are wont to console themselves with the reflection that they weren't bluffed at any rate. But this is a poor recompense for defeat and loss.

On Bluffing.

As the inveterate caller is bound to lose ultimately, so is the inveterate bluffer. In the limited game bluffing is a dangerous experiment at best. His bluff is limited to a comparatively small amount, and if the pot is large and any fair hand is out against him, he is almost certain to be called. It requires the closest attention and the shrewdest judgment to bluff successfully. There are some players, the habitual callers, that it is almost impossible to bluff, and it is well never to attempt it with them.

The question of bluffing is difficult to deal with, and I know of no law for its successful practice. There is a common error in this connection, however, that every Poker player should avoid: the attempt to retrieve losses by bluffing. Nothing is so futile as this, for the other players are expecting you to resort to this expedient, and their previous vic-

tories over you have led them to despise rather than fear you. It is far better to bluff in prosperity than in adversity, for then the other players do fear you.

Some players on entering a game begin by bluffing, being desirous to establish a reputation for this kind of play. They call this "advertising," and after having "advertised" lay in wait for good hands. The policy is not a bad one if good hands come, but it is a losing one if they do not come. Such players usually make the mistake of showing their hands whether they are called or not, and of exulting in the success of their ventures. This is not good Poker. For his own sake no player should ever show a hand that is not called. For every item of information concerning his play is of value to his adversaries. A cardinal principle of Poker is that no player is entitled to know anything of another's play unless he pays for his information.

On Attention.

This principle leads naturally to the matter of paying attention to the details of the game. The rules of Poker assume that each player takes advantage of his ample opportunities to know exactly what every other player at the table is doing or has done. As a consequence there is only one question that can be legally asked in Poker, provided each player follows the rules of the game strictly. This

is the question of the dealer as to how many cards he draws. If, however, a player makes a bet in such a way as to create a doubt as to the amount of his bet, he may very justly be asked to state his meaning plainly. But under no other circumstances are questions justified in Poker. It will be seen from this that the game may be played in comparative silence, and indeed a silent game of Poker is far more desirable and far more enjoyable than a noisy one.

Still any player at a poker table is permitted to say anything within decency that he pleases. Some players take advantage of this fact to banter their adversaries and to make all sorts of remarks concerning their hands with the purpose of misleading other players. Such players generally regard themselves as being very "smart" but they ultimately come to grief when they cross swords with the silent man who takes in every detail of the game and gives away nothing with regard to his own hand or play.

On Borrowing.

No player should ever borrow or lend a penny at the Poker table. And this applies equally to all games whether the chips are of real or nominal value. If it had no other effect than that of creating misunderstandings and disputes as to the amounts

borrowed or loaned, or as to whether or not these amounts had been repaid, this would be enough to condemn the practice. But it does more than this. It confuses the game; it creates ill-feeling; it encourages carelessness; it invites dishonesty; and it severs friendships. If old Polonius' theme had been Poker, he could not have given better advice when he said to Laertes:

“Neither a borrower nor a lender be:

For a loan oft loses both itself and friend;

And borrowing dulls the edge of husbandry.”

A question of no little importance is that concerning the length of time that a game of Poker should properly occupy. This should be determined before the game begins. A certain hour should be fixed for the game to end and it should end then, no matter how individual players may stand. Another advantage of fixing a time for stopping is that such an agreement keeps every player in the game until the hour of closing arrives. Otherwise some mean players are apt to make excuses and leave the game when they are ahead.

(In drawing, it is not well to hold up a side card unless it is for the purpose of deception.

Never bemoan your losses or rail at misfortune. Nothing is so ludicrous as a Poker player fuming and fretting over what is lost and crying like a big baby at every fresh defeat.

Never exult in victory, for it is impossible to tell when fortune may kick you off the pedestal of your exultation.

Do not think because you have filled a certain hand once that it is more difficult to fill the same hand a second or a third time. The chances against holding a certain hand are the same in every deal, just as the chances against throwing an ace are just the same in every toss of a die. In the case of the die the chances are always five to one against throwing an ace, whether the ace has been cast six times in succession or not at all.

In Poker parties numbering five or more, I would recommend that the game be played with two packs of cards at the same time. This is done by dealing with alternate packs, each dealer shuffling and cutting the cards that he has just dealt, and handing them to the age to deal. In this method as in the case of the single pack, any player at the board has the right to shuffle the cards. With two packs the discard should always be thrown to the dealer. The advantage of two packs is found in the gain of time ordinarily consumed in shuffling and dealing.

CHAPTER X.

Schenck on Poker.

No name has ever been so associated with the game of Draw Poker as that of the Hon. Robert C. Schenck, at one time the American Minister to Great Britain. For many years he has been accepted as an authority on the game, and although his rules do not cover all the variations and innovations of Poker, they are nevertheless worthy of perusal. It was doubtful whether General Schenck expected either fame or notoriety when he formulated these rules. Certainly the following extract from a letter written by him to the Hon. Thomas L. Young of Ohio, indicates that he did not:—

“In the Summer of 1872, while visiting with others at a country house in Somersetshire, the guests, as is usual in English society, amused themselves in the evening with games at cards; and, as is also usual, the stakes were for pennies and sixpences. They were anxious to learn the American game of Poker, of which they had heard, and of which some of them

matching the high card, and so getting a good two pairs, or something better possibly—while at the same time others may be deceived into believing that the player is drawing to threes.

When drawing to cards of the same suit, to try to make a flush, or to cards of successive denominations, to try to make a sequence, as many more cards are to be taken as will be needed to fill out the flush or the sequence. But it is seldom advisable to venture in to draw for either a flush or sequence when more than one card is required to complete the hand.

When a player holds fours in his original hand, it is as good as it can be ; and yet it is best to throw away the outside card and draw one, because others may then think he is only drawing to two pairs, or for a flush or a sequence, and will not suspect the value of the hand.

When one is in (as he ought seldom to be) without even so much as a pair, his choice must be, either to discard four cards, or three cards, and draw to the highest or two highest in the hand, or throw away the whole hand and draw five, or look content and serious, stand pat, and bet high !

The player determining to try this last alternative on a worthless hand, had generally better begin by raising when he goes in, or else nobody will be likely to believe in his pretended strong hand.

Relative Value of Hands in Their Order, Beginning with Best.

1. A Sequence Flush—which is a sequence of five cards, and all of the same suit.

2. Fours—Which is four of the five cards of the same denomination.

3. A Full—Which is a hand consisting of three cards of the same denomination, and two of likewise equal denomination.

4. A Flush—Which is all five cards of the same suit.

5. A Sequence—Which is all five cards not of the same suit but all in sequence. [In computing the value of a sequence, an ace counts either as the highest or the lowest card ; that is, below a deuce or above a king.)

6. Threes—Which is three cards of the same denomination, but the other two of different denominations from each other.

7. Two pairs.

8. One pair.

When a hand has neither of the above the count is by the cards of the highest value or denomination.

When parties opposed each holds a pair, the highest pair wins, and the same when each party holds threes or fours.

When each party holds two pairs, the highest pair

of the two determines the relative value of the hands.

When each party holds a sequence, the hand commencing with the highest card in sequence wins ; so, also, when two or more parties hold flushes against each other.

That full counts highest of which the three cards of the same denomination are highest. The two cards of the same denomination help only to constitute the full, but do not add to the value of the hand. When hands are equal so far that each party holds a pair, or two pairs, of exactly the same value, then the next highest card or cards in each hand must be compared with the next highest card or cards in the other hand to determine which wins.

In case of the highest hands (which very seldom occurs) being exactly equal, the pool is divided.

The main elements of success in the game are : *good luck ; (2) good cards ; (3) plenty of cheek ; (4) and good temper.*

CHAPTER XI.

Mathematical Probabilities.

For the benefit of those readers, who may find pleasure in trying to reduce draw Poker to the exactness of mathematics, I republish certain tables below, which may aid them materially. Dr. Pole calculated and arranged the following table of probabilities of the different Poker hands falling to any given player before the draw.

(The probabilities of the higher classes of hands are excluded from those of higher value, in which they might also occur.)

	Probability.	Odds against.
1. Straight flush....	.00000155	 64,999 to 1
2. Fours	.000242	 4,164 to 1
3. Full hand.....	.00145	 693 to 1
4. Flush ..	.00195	 507 to 1
5. Straight.....	.00395	 254 to 1
6. Threes	.0218	 45 to 1
7. Two pairs.....	.0476	 20 to 1
8. One pair.....	.437	 13 to 10

Lieut. William Hoffman of the U. S. Army in 1879, arranged the following table of possible hands before the draw:

Number of possible hands, each different, 2,598,-
960. Of these

40.....	are Straight Flushes.
624.....	" Fours,
3,744.....	" Fulls,
5,108.....	" Flushes,
10,200.....	" Straights,
54,912.....	" Threes,
123,552.....	" Two pairs
1,098,240.....	" One pair.

1,296,420=Total number of hands containing one
or better. The two pairs are subdivided as follows:

Aces and	19,008	} = 123,552
Kings "	17,424	
Queens "	15,840	
Jacks	14,256	
Tens	12,672	
Nines "	11,088	
Eights "	9,504	
Sevens "	7,920	
Sixes "	6,336	
Fives "	4,752	
Fours "	3,168	
Threes "	1,584	

Then there are of hands that have less value than
one pair :

502,860	Ace highs
335,580	King "
213,180	Queen "
127,500	Jack "
70,380	Ten "
34,680	Nine "
14,280	Eight "
4,080	Seven "

1,302,540 = Total number of hands of less value
than one pair:

$$\text{Proof } \left\{ \begin{array}{l} 1,296,420 = \text{Number of hands containing one pair or over.} \\ 1,302,540 \quad \quad \quad \text{"} \quad \quad \quad \text{"} \quad \quad \quad \text{"} \quad \quad \quad \text{less than one pair.} \\ \hline 2,598,960 = \text{Number of possible combinations.} \end{array} \right.$$

Some attempt has been made to reduce the probabilities of the draw to a mathematical basis, but such attempts are at best only guesswork, and therefore have no place here. In this connection I may be allowed to express the opinion that no mere mathematician will ever become a successful Poker player. Abstract logic is what is needed to win at Poker.

CHAPTER XII.

Progressive Poker.

The latest development of Draw Poker is known as Progressive Poker and doubtless owes its origin to the popularity of progressive euchre. As a parlor game it is highly amusing and bids fair to monopolize the attention of those lovers of Poker, who play for chips of nominal value only. Progressive Poker may be played by any number of people sufficient to fill at least four tables. It is not necessary that there should be the same number of players at each table, and in fact usage has almost fixed five as the number for the head table and four for each of the others, except the last or "booby" table, at which any number may play up to six.

New comers may be accommodated at the "booby" table until the number of players at that table exceeds six, when a new "booby" table must be made by taking all the players from the old "booby" table except four.

The arrangement of the tables, the assignment of the players to their respective places, the distribu-

tion of chips and all questions that may arise in the progress of the game must be left to the banker, who is chosen by the players and whose decision is final.

The numbers of the tables and the amount of the ante and limit allowed at each should be indicated by cards hung over the tables. At the head table there should also be a bell to be used as a signal to stop playing or to change tables.

The placing of the players at the several tables should be done by drawing cards, on which the numbers of the tables are marked. In order that there may be as nearly as possible an equal number of ladies and gentlemen at each table, the cards for each table should be divided equally, the ladies drawing from one package and the gentlemen from the other.

When the players have been allotted to their respective tables, it is the duty of the banker to furnish each with the same amount of chips. These chips should be of three different colors, representing three distinct values. For instance, if the three colors are white, red and blue, a red chip should be worth five white ones, and a blue chip five red ones or twenty-five white ones.

The players are now ready to begin the game, which is played according to the rules of Draw Poker already laid down in this volume, with the following exceptions :

At the head table, table stakes must be played ; that is, no player can bet more chips than he actually has, and each player is entitled to a show for all that he has. Under no circumstances can a player borrow from another player or the banker in order to bet at the head table. At this table *solely* are jack pots allowed. These are played as jack pots ordinarily are, except that the "buck" (any small article, such as a knife) is placed in the center of the table to be taken by the winner of the first pot after each change of players. This winner places the "buck" on the table in front of him, and when his turn to deal comes, he deposits it in the center of the table as a sign that a jack pot must be played. The jack pot must be "fed" with a blue chip from each player before each deal until it is opened. Generally in Progressive Poker, progressive jack pots are played ; that is, as the deal progresses without opening the pot, the value of the opening hand increases from jacks or better to aces or better, where it remains until the pot is opened. Blinds and straddles are permitted at the head table only.

At every other table than the head table, a limit exists, beyond which no player can ever make a single bet. These limits run as follows: At the second table, one blue chip; at the third, three red chips; at the fourth, two red chips; at the fifth, one red chip; and at the last or "booby" table, one

white chip. Should there be more or less than six tables, the banker must arrange the limits to suit the circumstances.

At all the tables the deal at the beginning of the game is settled by cutting the cards, the lowest dealing, ace being low. As the game progresses, however, and the players change tables the age goes to the last lady coming to a table, and the cards must be dealt by the player at her right. Should two ladies progress at once to the same table, or should no lady progress thither, the deal must be settled by cutting.

The time of progression depends on the play at the head table entirely. When a jack pot is won at this table the bell must be rung, and all the players must stop playing, unless there is an unfinished hand at any table. The players, who are interested in that hand, may call, but can do nothing more as a raise is not allowed after the bell has been rung. If the bell sounds at the beginning of a draw or while the draw is in progress, the hands must be shown without betting.

The method of determining progression is this: At the head table the players, except the winner of the jack pot, must cut the cards in turn and the two lowest must progress downwards to the "booby" table. At each of the other tables the winner of the last two pots must progress to the next higher

table. If the last two pots should have been taken by one player, the remaining players must cut and the highest must progress to the next higher table.

At the close of the game, which shall be duly announced by the banker, each player shall count his chips and inform the banker of the amount. The ladies, who have won the highest and the next highest amounts in chips should receive first and second prizes respectively for ladies. Similarly first and second prizes are awarded to the gentlemen. Sometimes, however, "booby" prizes are given to the lady and gentleman, who have lost the greatest amounts.

If in the progress of the game any player should lose all his chips he can replenish his stock by borrowing from the banker, who must charge such a player with the amount loaned.

If by any chance the banker should run out of chips he may borrow from any of the players, giving due credit for the amount borrowed.

The "Joker."

In this connection attention may be called to one other variation of Draw Poker that occasionally finds its way into all forms of the game. This is the use of the "joker." In playing any form of Poker with an extra card, the player holding it is at liberty to call it anything he pleases, and if by so doing he can

make a better Poker hand than his adversaries he must win. For instance, if the ace, king, queen, knave and ten of hearts were to be out against the ace, king, queen, knave of diamonds and the joker, the latter hand would win. So, too, if four aces were out against four deuces and the joker, the latter hand would win, as the holder of the latter hand would have the right to claim *five* deuces. This innovation, however, has never proved popular, and is, in fact, so foreign to the *genus* of Poker that I would not have mentioned it at all, had it not been for the desire to cover every phase of the game. Some fun may be extracted from the use of the joker in Poker, but the game is complete without it and therefore the extra card should be condemned as superfluous and confusing.

14



Boston Public Library
Central Library, Copley Square

Division of
Reference and Research Services

The Date Due Card in the pocket indicates the date on or before which this book should be returned to the Library.

Please do not remove cards from this pocket.

MAY 15 1929

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY



3 9999 06916 261 6

